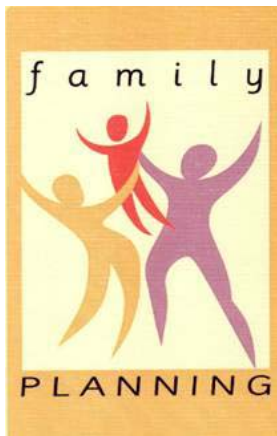


Planned pregnancies have contributed to the better health of infants, children, women and their families here in Idaho.

In 2003, Idaho reproductive health clinics cared for 38,541 individuals with over 69,441 visits made to Idaho's 42 clinic sites.



**Idaho Reproductive Health Program**  
(208)334-5956

[www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)

Click on [health](#) to see information about family planning.

#### References

Hatcher, R., et al, Contraceptive Technology (eighteenth edition). New York, NY, Ardent Media, Inc., 2004.

Nichols-Johnson, V. The Breastfeeding Dyad and Contraception. Breastfeeding Abstracts. 2001; 21:(2):11-2.

Evidence Based Guidelines for Breastfeeding Management During the First Fourteen Days. International Lactation Consultant Association.

All reproductive health services are confidential.  
For more information on the Reproductive Health Program, or to find services in your area, please contact your local Panhandle Health District office.

#### **Kootenai County**

8500 N. Atlas Road  
Hayden ID 83835  
208 415-5100

#### **Bonner County**

1020 Michigan  
Sandpoint ID 83864  
208 263-5159

#### **Boundary County**

7402 Caribou  
Bonners Ferry ID 83805  
208 267-5558

#### **Benewah County**

711 Jefferson  
St. Maries ID 83861  
208 245-4556

#### **Shoshone County**

114 W Riverside  
Kellogg ID 83837  
208 786-7474

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# Birth Control and Breastfeeding



**Panhandle Health District**  
Healthy People in Healthy Communities  
[www2.state.id.us/phd1](http://www2.state.id.us/phd1)



## I want to breastfeed my baby. What birth control method is best?

There are many safe and effective birth control methods for breastfeeding mothers.

**Choosing a contraceptive is an important decision that should be made by each woman with the guidance of her health care provider.**



Breast feeding your baby is one of the best decisions you will make as a parent. breast milk contains a complete and perfect mix of nutrients and antibodies that is optimal for growth and may protect against diseases. Studies have found that breastfed babies may have fewer and less serious health problems than those fed with an artificially produced formula.

It is important for a new mom to maintain her own health in order to better care for her baby. An unplanned pregnancy, especially when a woman has just given birth, may have serious affects on her physical and emotional health. All pregnant women should have the counseling and medical care that will allow them to select a method of birth control before delivering their baby.

## Contraceptive Options for Breastfeeding Women

- Barrier methods such as condoms, diaphragms, and cervical caps are safe for breastfeeding mothers. Diaphragms must be refitted after delivery to ensure proper fit to give greatest protection. Condoms do provide some protection against STDs and HIV.
- Progestin-only methods, such as the “mini-pill”, Depo-Provera and the Minera IUS are very effective methods of birth control. These methods may be initiated six weeks following delivery or earlier, depending on individual needs.
- The Paragard Copper IUD (Intra-uterine device) is a good choice for a breastfeeding mother. The copper IUD is intended as a long-term option and may be left in place for up to 10 years. This IUD is very effective and has no effect on breastfeeding.
- Birth control pills, vaginal ring and the patch are not generally recommended during breastfeeding. The estrogen contained in these methods may decrease the amount of breast milk produced by the mother.
- Post-partum tubal ligation and male vasectomy are permanent methods of sterilization. Couples who do not wish to have more children may be candidates for either of these procedures. Reversal of these methods is expensive and may not always be successful.
- Natural family planning (NFP) can be a difficult method to use following delivery due to the lifestyle and hormonal changes after having a baby.

## When will I be able to become pregnant after having a baby?

**It is possible for a woman to become pregnant soon after having a baby? It is important to start using a birth control method of choice within three weeks following delivery?**

The hormones involved in breastfeeding do have a natural contraceptive effect. This natural contraception is recognized as a form of birth control and is known as the Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM). This method is 98% effective during the first six months after delivery, but only if the following guidelines are followed:

- Breastfeeding provides a 98% protection from pregnancy only when the mother is exclusively breastfeeding. This means that no other liquid or solid is given to the baby. Any supplementation or disruption of the feeding schedule can increase the chance of a new mother becoming pregnant.
- Women must not have had their first post-partum period and the baby must not be over six months of age.
- The contraceptive effect gained from breastfeeding is improved by using a back-up method of contraception.
- Mothers who provide breast milk to their infants by hand expression or a breast pump should not rely on the LAM method for contraception.

